

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The distinguished Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. THURMOND. I want to express my appreciation to the able Senator from Idaho for the kind words he had to say about my service as chairman of the Armed Services Committee. Senator KEMPTHORNE has been a devoted, able member of that committee and has rendered the defense of this country great service. Our country is indebted to him for all that he has done to promote a strong defense in this Nation. Again, I am proud of his friendship and proud of his service to his Nation.

Mr. President, I understand this has been cleared on the other side of the aisle. I have been authorized to yield back all debate time on the Defense authorization conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THURMOND. Now, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, September 6, the Federal debt stood at \$5,220,377,655,156.41.

One year ago, September 6, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,969,749,000,000.

Five years ago, September 6, 1991, the Federal debt stood at \$3,623,922,000,000. This reflects an increase of more than \$1,596,455,655,156.41 during the 5 years from 1991 to 1996.

TRIBUTE TO VICE ADM. EDWARD M. STRAW

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Vice Adm. Edward M. Straw, U.S. Navy, who will retire on October 25 after a distinguished 35-year career. Admiral Straw will relinquish control of the Defense Logistics Agency, which is also known as the DLA, on the day he retires. He has served as Director of the DLA since 1992.

DLA is the largest combat support agency in the Department of Defense. If it were a private company, it would be the 78th largest company in the Fortune 500. Admiral Straw's performance

in directing 50,000 civilian and military members, and in managing \$14 billion in annual funding, has been recognized both inside the Department of Defense and in the private sector as a model of highly effective management. Under his leadership, DLA became one of the first Federal agencies ever to win a Ford Foundation Innovations in Government Award.

During his tenure, Admiral Straw re-engineered and completely revamped the DLA. His fine efforts have saved our \$10 billion to date, and are expected to yield an additional \$20 billion in savings and cost avoidance over the next 6 years while significantly improving responsiveness to customers.

Admiral Straw began his military service in 1961 when he was commissioned upon graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy. He served numerous sea duty assignments and held senior policy positions within the Department of the Navy. These include Vice Commander, Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer of the Naval Supply Systems Command, and Director of Supply Policy and Programs on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations. In 1994, he organized and successfully conducted the Defense Performance Review. He will also receive the Society of Logistics Engineers' annual Founders' Award for 1996, later this year.

Mr. President, our Nation owes Admiral Straw its appreciation for his truly distinguished service. I wish him and his wife, Chris, continued success and happiness in all future endeavors.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, under a unanimous consent agreement, the Senate has obligated itself to consider the Chemical Weapons Convention later this week.

The timing is fortuitous. Getting the Senate to this point has taken much longer than was needed or one would have hoped, but, if the Senate does indeed decide this week to consent to the ratification of the convention, we will be in on the setting up of the organizations required by the convention—a conference of all the states parties, a 41-member executive council, and a technical secretariat, which will be the international body responsible for conducting verification activities.

As of this point, 62 nations have ratified the convention. The convention will enter into force 180 days after it gains the 65th party. If the Senate acts now, our action will enable us to be in on every aspect of the setting up of the convention. Moreover, we will surely bring others with us and, thus, help ensure widespread adherence to the treaty and do much to ensure its effectiveness.

This treaty represents a serious and important step in our continuing effort to curb and to end the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction to us, our friends and allies, and to the world.

The Chemical Weapons Convention, when it enters into force, will ban the

production, acquisition, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons.

In it each state party undertakes never, under any circumstances, to:

Develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, or retain chemical weapons, or transfer, directly or indirectly, chemical weapons to anyone;

Use chemical weapons;

Engage in any military preparations to use chemical weapons; and

Assist, encourage, or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a state party under this convention.

It is very important that we be involved every step of the way. Particularly important is our involvement in a leading role during the 180-day period when so much is done to prepare for the entry into force of the treaty. Simply put, during this crucial period for the treaty, we simply cannot afford to be on the outside looking in. If we stay out, we will have no say over the activities of the governing body. We will not be involved in the establishment of the inspection regime, which, if done as envisaged, could be very important in providing information as to the presence or absence, worldwide, of chemical weapons programs. If we are not a party, we will certainly avoid having the minor inconvenience of international inspections in our country, but at the price of having no expert Americans on inspection teams worldwide looking for illicit chemical weapons activity.

These would be major prices to pay for failure to participate in this important undertaking. There is another major price to be made if we do not become a party. Our failure to join the treaty would constitute a major body blow to our critically important chemical industry, which supports ratification in overwhelming numbers.

The problem that failure to ratify would cause for the industry was put clearly to the Committee on Foreign Relations by the president of the Chemical Manufacturers Association, Mr. Frederick Webber, who said:

Mr. Chairman, honest businesses have nothing to fear from this treaty. On the contrary, the real price to pay is for not taking action. The United States, as I am sure you know, is the world's preferred supplier of chemical products. Chemical exports, last year, topped \$60 billion. Indeed, we are the leading exporting industry in America.

Those exports, that \$60 billion figure, sustained 240,000 high-paying American jobs throughout the land. That makes us the nation's largest exporter. More than 10 cents of every export dollar is a product of the chemical industry.

We are a fast, reliable, high-quality supplier to customers in every corner of the globe. But we could lose that distinction, we could lose it if the U.S. does not ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Convention sharply restricts trade in chemicals with countries who are not parties to the treaty. If the Senate does not ratify, our customers will cut us off. They will drop us, and find other suppliers.

Unfortunately, we will be lumped in the same categories as nations like Libya, Iraq, and North Korea. We do not believe this is an acceptable option.